

Draft

Rockville Environment Commission Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, April 3, 2016

Diamondback Terrapin, City Hall,
111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chair John Becker, Steve Cardon, Alicia Hosmer, Amanda Matheny, Clark Reed, Steve Sprague, Helen Triolo, and Fedon Vayanis.

Commissioners Absent: Lea Rosenbohm,

Council Liaison: Mark Pierzchala

City Staff: Erica Shingara (Environmental Management)

Guests: Stephanie Riddick and Pernel Gee

Meeting Commencement and Introductions

The meeting convened at 7:02 pm by Chair Becker.

Meeting Agenda Review and Revision

With no changes to the agenda, Commissioner Reed moved and Commissioner Sprague seconded a motion to approve the agenda. The motion passed (6-0). (Commissioners Cardon and Hosmer were absent for the vote).

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Vayanis moved and Commissioner Triolo seconded a motion to approve the March 3, 2016 meeting minutes. The motion passed (7-0). (Commissioner Hosmer was absent for the vote).

Environmental Excellence Awards

The Commission discussed updates on the nominations for Environmental Excellence Awards:

- The City received a nomination for the Solar Working Group at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville (UUCR) for Outstanding Leadership in Environmental Practices; however, due to a permit compliance issue on their property, this nomination was put on hold until the issue is resolved.
- The Commission noted that Peerless Rockville nominated the passive house at 214 Harrison Street for an award last year. While the Environment Commission thought this was a strong application, they wanted energy performance data to demonstrate the energy savings achieved through this innovative design. EMD contacted Peerless Rockville to see if they could supplement the nomination with energy data and has not received a response yet.
- The Montgomery College Science Center was nominated in 2010. EMD had sent several requests for energy performance data to demonstrate green building performance but has not received a response. EMD will coordinate with Councilmember Pierzchala for another information request.
- The Commission suggested including photos and images during the awards presentation.

- **Action Item:** EMD will coordinate with Commissioner Cardon on the recommendation to the Mayor and Council for James Farrelly. EMD will identify potential dates.

Hometown Holidays Planning (May 28 from 1:30-8 p.m.)

Commissioner Becker reported that he invited RBAC and the solar co-op to partner for the HTH booth on Sunday but they were not available. Erica Shingara spoke with special events staff about the Commission's challenges staffing the booth on both days. Instead of having the full rented booth/tent for both days, there may be a possibility to have a simple pop-up tent and table on Saturday. The location is to be determined and would need to fit in with the HTH layout; ideally, the booth could be co-located by the Tiny House display. Commissioner Triolo moved and Commissioner Reed seconded the motion for the Commission to host the booth on Saturday on under this option. The motion was approved unanimous Try 2 tables.

- **Action Item:** Chair Becker volunteered for set up and take down.
- **Action Item:** Commissioner Rosenbohm was tasked to send out a revised volunteer sign-up sheet for 2-3 people per shift from 1:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Action Item:** Erica Shingara will email Commissioner Triolo the wheel insert template to make new recycling inserts; order 1 rain barrel to raffle; order giveaways such as recycled blue jean pencils, soy crayons and coloring books as previously approved in the budget; and identify other EMD items to share for giveaways.

Building Energy Benchmarking

- Commissioner Reed described the concept of building energy benchmarking, the importance for better energy management, and the national trends in building energy benchmarking and disclosure policies. EPA's ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager provides free online software to benchmark building energy performance. Users enter utility data, operating characteristics, and property information and the software assigns an ENERGY STAR score to a building that ranges from one to 100. Higher scores indicate that the building is performing better than peer facilities nationwide. At their last meeting, the Energy Committee reviewed the Montgomery County benchmarking ordinance and is advocating for it to apply in Rockville.
- Erica Shingara described that transparency in building energy usage allows owners, buyers, tenants, and investors to compare building energy performance in the market – similar to how consumers can compare miles-per-gallon ratings for vehicle fuel efficiency. Montgomery County has a new building energy benchmarking law that currently does not apply to properties in Rockville; however, the City has the option to opt-into the program (as-is) and have the County implement the current program in Rockville. Buildings covered by Montgomery County's law include non-residential buildings that are 50,000 square feet or greater, or a group of buildings that share a parcel (have the same Tax ID) that collectively have a square footage of 50,000 SF or greater. The law requires data verification by County-recognized data verifier in the first year and every three years. This could pose a nominal cost to the property owner, depending on the size and complexity of the building (ranging from \$200-\$1000). The County is also developing new financing programs (the Green Bank and Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) that can help Rockville buildings invest in energy efficiency and clean energy upgrades.
- Commissioner Reed moved and Commissioner Hosmer seconded the motion recommending endorsing an ordinance amendment to allow Montgomery County's energy benchmarking program (Chapter 18A, Article 6A) to apply in Rockville. The Commission discussed the proposal. Commissioner Vayanis noted that benchmarking was important and that the County has clarified most of the ambiguities; however, he had some concerns about some of the criteria

used for verification credentials. He noted that some credentials may not be comparable to others and could result in unreliable data. The Commission noted that the City would need to accept the County's law "as-is" and could not make changes at this time; however, the Commission could advocate in the future for changes to the County's law if it was not working. The Commission also noted that the data is available publicly and could be checked. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

- ***Energy Committee:*** Clark Reed reported that the Maryland Legislation on Clean Energy Jobs-Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard Revisions passed both houses. There will be a solar co-op meeting on April 13 with Maryland Sun, Montgomery County, Poolesville and Rockville to discuss next steps and potential new co-op opportunity. Rockville's Solar Co-op was the largest in Maryland with 63 installations and total installed system size of 442 kw. Commissioner Triolo wrote an article on the solar co-op that will be features in MyGreenMontgomery.
- ***Composting and Recycling:*** Commissioner Sprague reported there were not any updates from the County on their plan for composting. The County has not decided whether to build a facility or have a private facility constructed. This uncertainty impacts Rockville's composting options and whether the City should consider using County facilities or consider implementing a small community option. The Committee will consider options and develop recommendations for residential composting (June or July). The committee also discussed goals for improving recycling at Hometown Holidays.
- ***Watershed Protection:*** Commissioner Matheny reported that the Committee developed talking points for neighborhood outreach on watershed programs and Commission activities. In lieu of the regular meeting, the Committee will attend the East Rockville Citizens Association meeting to promote cleanups and Rainscapes Rewards. They are also planning the April 16th Maryvale stream cleanup from 10 a.m. to noon. Audubon will come to demo the stream monitoring app. They may attend the May meeting at the Americana for outreach.
- ***Sustainability:*** Commissioner Becker reported that the Committee is planning to attend the future public forum meetings for the Comprehensive Master Plan update. Commissioner Hosmer reported on the wildlife habitat promotion opportunities at Earth Month.

Environment Management Division Update

Erica Shingara reviewed upcoming events and projects:

- Comprehensive Master Plan Forums (4/19, 5/10, 5/24, 6/14). Commissioners are encouraged to participate in all sessions to help set environmental and sustainability goals and actions through 2040.
- The City is planning a series of activities to celebrate Earth Month in April. Details will be included in the March and April Rockville Reports. As part of Earth Month, the City is advertising for volunteers for the Commission's Maryvale Stream Cleanup on April 16.
- A proposed naming policy for City property, commemorations and awards will be brought to the Commission in May. The Environment Commission is proposed to have responsibility for naming of stormwater management ponds.
- Staff drafted amendments to the Floodplain Ordinance to comply with new FEMA requirements. The amendments are currently being reviewed by MDE and FEMA. It is anticipated that this ordinance will be brought to the Commission for review after May.

New Business

- Commissioner Triolo described Montgomery County Public School's proposed plan to turn the parking lot in front of the Carver Education Center on Mannakee Street into a bus depot for 100 school buses. She identified potential environmental concerns such as air emissions, possible diesel spills and general runoff and requested the Commission further review this topic. Councilmember Pierzchala indicated that MCPS has not submitted an application to the City yet that would allow for a fact-based environmental review (air, stormwater, deicing, hazardous material, etc.). The Commission requested that this topic will be included on the agenda for a future meeting when more information becomes available.
- Chair Becker reminded the Commission that the Farmers Market will start in May and the Commission may consider continuing outreach at this event.
- Chair Becker reminded the Commission that the City's budget public hearings are in April.
- Stephanie Riddick reminded the Commission that Montgomery County's Greenfest will be held on April 30.

Adjourn

The Commission adjourned by acclamation at 8:52 p.m.

Next Commission Meeting

The Commission will tentatively meeting on **Thursday, May 5, 2015 at 7:00 pm** in the **Diamondback Terrapin Conference Room at the Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville Maryland 20850-2321**. The public is invited to attend.